Meeting Minutes

April 26-27, 2001

Sierra Front - Northwestern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council

Walley's Hot Springs Resort 2001 Foothill Road

Genoa, Nevada 89411

(REVISED minutes as approved by the RAC at its July 26th Meeting in Winnemucca, Nevada)

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I. RAC Attendance

COUNCIL MEMBER	RESOURCE/EXPERTIS E	THURS 4-26	FRI 4-27
Jacques Etchegoyhen - CHAIRMAN	Elected Official	X	X
Tina Nappe - VICE CHAIRMAN	Environment	X	X
Susie Askew	Wild Horses & Burros		
Karen Boeger	Recreation	X	X
Gerry Emm	Native Americans	X	
John Falen	Nevada Cattlemen	X	X
Mark Farman	State Agency	X	X
Jerry Hepworth	Energy/Minerals	X	X
Hugh Judd	Wildlife		
Robert 'Bob' Kautz	Archaeology	X	X(AM)
Tebeau Piquet	Mining		
Bennie Romero	Livestock	X	
William 'Bill' Roullier	Transportation/ROW	X	X
Sherm Swanson	Academic	X	X
Larie Trippet	Public-at-Large	X	X

II. Summary of Motions

1. Motion by Falen, Second by Hepworth, to approve the minutes of the January 25-26, 2001 meeting. Approved by unanimous vote.

No other motions were made at this meeting.

III. Summary of Action Assignments

- 1. The Winnemucca Field Office will provide to the RAC's Education Subcommittee (Chairman Larie Trippet) a description of methods used by BLM elsewhere to educate users about outdoor ethics, laws and regulations; what methods have worked and what methods have failed.
- 2. The SF-NWGB RAC will send a letter to the Forest Service seeking an advisory role in Forest Service management in Nevada.
- 3. Include the recommendations of the RAC Education Subcommittee in the Agenda for the July 25th RAC Meeting. (See Appendix 7.)
- 4. The Winnemucca Field Office will provide to the RAC a list of problems with the NCA showing those that can be handled administratively. This item is dependent upon first learning from the Senators' offices what NCA issues concern them.
- 5. The Winnemucca Field Office will produce a map showing controversial issues associated with the NCA and associated Wilderness areas. This map should be provided to the Joint RACs' NCA Subgroup before its June 21-22 meeting.

IV. Quotes of the Meeting

"History is tied not to time, but to place."

Brian Wallace, Chairman, Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California

"Change is inevitable; progress is an option."
Tom Crawford, Economist, CCFO

V. Field Office Overview Reports

A. Winnemucca Field Manager Terry Reed's Report

- 1. Written Summary of the Report is Appendix 2.
- 2. WFO Report Q & A Session is Appendix 2-A.
- 3. Items covered orally, but not included in the written report.
 - a. Winnemucca Field Office (WFO) Recreation Guide update, showing the new NCA and associated Wilderness Areas should be ready for distribution in about one month.

- b. WFO is sponsoring Partnership Training at the Winnemucca Convention Center June 26-27-28. Invitations will be sent to members of the Joint RAC's NCA Subcommittee and other interested parties. (Brochure is Appendix 9.)
- c. Updated NCA Maps are nearly ready for distribution, but this will be an ongoing project.
- d. A special edition of BLM's Nevada Sage devoted entirely to the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails NCA will be out in May.

B. Carson City Field Manager John Singlaub's Report

- 1. Written Summary of the Report is Appendix 3.
- 2. CCFO Report Q & A Session is Appendix 3-A.

VI. US Forest Service RAC Formation and RAC Charter Changes Status Report

Jo Simpson, Chief of Communications, BLM Nevada State Office, reported that turnover in the membership of the RAC was very important to the previous Administration, but since the current Administration's views on this are unclear, it is all right for current members to seek renomination.

Mark Struble, CCFO Public Affairs Officer, said that all RAC members whose terms are expiring have done this.

Jo reported that the Forest Service uses timber sale money to fund RAC-like groups, and in our area of interest only Nye County in Nevada and Alpine County in California generate enough timber sale money to do this.

Jacques Etchegoyhen stated that the SF-NWGB RAC has already voted to seek an advisory involvement in Forest Service management in Nevada, and directed that a letter be sent on this subject from the RAC to the Forest Service.

VII. Pine Nut Mountains Plan Amendment Process Presentation

Presenters:

Dan Jacquet - Management Lead - Carson City Field Office (CCFO) Assistant Field Manager for Renewable Resources.

Tom Crawford - Team Lead - CCFO Economist.

Mike McQueen - NEPA Planner - CCFO Planning and Environmental Coordinator.

The reason a management plan amendment is needed for the Pine Nut Mountains is because of the tremendous population growth in the area and the increased demands and pressures larger numbers of people are putting on resources. Since 1985 the population of Carson City has grown by 70% and that of Douglas County by 30%. The amendment process is being approached from an interdisciplinary viewpoint without emphasizing one resource over another. Community involvement is considered vital to producing a successful management plan amendment.

Perhaps the most difficult problem to overcome during the planning process is the mixed landownership pattern in the Pine Nuts. A significant amount of private land mostly owned by Don Bently (Bently AgroDynamics) is scattered throughout the Pine Nut Mountains. Mr. Bently

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has generally indicated his willingness to exchange or sell these lands to BLM. Interspersed

among the BLM administered lands and the other private lands are approximately 60,000 acres of Indian Allotments originally granted to members of the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California under provisions of the Dawes Act of 1887. These allotments extend across the state line into Alpine County California. Unlike most Indian allotments, these were deeded by the federal government to Washoe Tribe members directly from Public Domain status. In other words, these allotment lands were never part of an Indian Reservation, as is the case with most Indian allotments in the rest of the United States.

Gerry Emm explained that since the allotments were not created from reservation lands, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and not the Washoe Tribe has administrative responsibility for them. He also said that there are multiple owners, approximately 1,000 of them. Many of these inherited their interests through intestate succession and therefore have undivided interests in the lands. It is extremely difficult to transfer title or make binding management decisions for lands with multiple owners - especially multiple owners with undivided interests. Over the years ownership of the allotments has come to include Indians who are not members of the Washoe Tribe as well as owners who are non-Indian. Once an allotment passes completely out of Indian ownership it ceases to be "Indian Allotment land" and goes on the county tax roles with the same status as any other private land. However, as stated earlier, approximately 60,000 acres in the Pine Nuts remains in Indian Allotment status. The first step is to compile an accurate list of all the owners of the allotments. Currently, BLM, BIA, Douglas County, Bently AgroDynamics, and the Washoe Tribe are meeting to discuss how to correct the allotment ownership problems within the planning area. The allotment owners need to establish a representation group to join in these discussions.

Carnegie Smokey Jr., a member of the Washoe Tribe, spoke from the audience and said that the Washoe Tribe never signed a treaty or lost a war that transferred ownership of their ancestral lands, including the Pine Nut Mountains, to the United States. He said the Washoe Tribe wants to retain as much land as possible and keep it in its pristine state, explaining that traditional gathering practices are still carried on in the Pine Nuts. He also said non-native species like bears and horses should not be introduced or allowed to remain in the Pine Nut Mountains.

The Pine Nut Mountains Plan Folder [Planning Area Map, etc.] is Appendix 4.

VIII. Tour of the Pine Nut Mountains

RAC members and some guests took a tour of the Pine Nut Mountains Planning Area guided by the CCFO Staff. The tour began at 12:00 noon and ended after 4:00 p.m. Sites visited in the Southern Pine Nuts included: a large transfer site; and an unauthorized paint ball war zone complete with a truck-load of strategically placed straw bales. In the Northern Pine Nuts the tour included: drives through many urban-interface areas where houses could be seen to be encroaching further and further into wild lands at the fringes of the mountains; Coyote Rock, a landmark the Washoe Tribe has always used for traditional practices that has been desecrated by graffiti; a stop demonstrating the takeover by Pinon-Juniper trees of large areas of the mountains to the point where grasses, shrubs and forbs have difficulty surviving; a reclaimed sand pit; and a view of a herd of 10-12 wild horses.

Brian Wallace, Chairman of the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, accompanied the tour group and kindly provided very useful narratives at several stops that helped RAC members better understand the issues important to the Washoe Tribe that may be addressed in the amendment process. These include boundary signing to let visitors know when they are entering Indian Allotment lands, education to help end desecration of traditional sites, and the need to consolidate or block-up land ownership.

The tour provided an excellent overview of the Pine Nut Mountains Planning Area and the issues the plan amendment will address.

IX. RAC and Public Comments on the Pine Nut Mountains Tour and Plan Amendment

Larie Trippet - How does the RAC provide advice to the BLM [on the Pine Nut Mountains amendment]?

John Singlaub (BLM) - We're at the beginning of the process now. BLM accepts the suggestions offered by all members, along with comments from other parties. As we go along, ideas coalesce into management decisions.

Jacques Etchegoyhen - When land goes from public to private ownership, it isn't likely to remain pristine.

Tina Nappe - What happens when one of the Pine Nut Indian Allotments is sold to a non-Indian?

John Singlaub (BLM) - The land then goes onto the county tax roles. One problem is how can management decisions about the future of the Indian Lands be enforced when they are owned by so many individuals? That is one of the problems we're dealing with now.

Jacques - It seems that we should help the Washoe Indian owners to consolidate and retain their lands in the Pine Nuts and if that increases their lands, so be it!

Tina - A problem is not knowing, when you look at it, who owns the lands in the Pine Nuts - BLM, Indians, or others. Also, a cost-benefit item that needs to be addressed is the cost of fire suppression/prevention by the feds in areas where development expands into wild lands.

Mark Farman - BLM needs to coordinate with the State-wide Sage Grouse planning effort. Local groups are being formed and the Pine Nuts planning team should be represented.

Bob Kautz - It's important to understand the vegetative history of the area when planning: pinon and juniper trees have only spread to the Pine Nuts in the last four hundred years.

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Judy Sturgis (Public) - Could BLM commit to managing two acres of BLM lands for traditional Washoe Tribe values for every one acre of Indian

Allotment lands managed in like manner?

John Singlaub (BLM) - If the Washoe Tribe can create a trust to enforce management decisions for the allotment lands, this might be an option.

John Falen - Can Indian Allotment lands be blocked up and consolidated?

John Singlaub (BLM) - When we began this process that's what we looked at. Then we found out how complicated the land ownership was. But we're still working on it.

Karen Boeger - Urban interface issues are found throughout the West. We should not take the approach that urban encroachment on wild lands is inevitable and cannot be managed. It should be managed and kept under some kind of control.

John Singlaub (BLM) - I agree. Getting county sheriffs to expand their patrols into wild lands, and enlisting the help of local residents helps a great deal.

Terry Reed (BLM) - Some State regulations are already enforced on public lands.

Unidentified (Public) -I've never seen an enforcement person in the Pine Nuts. They must get out there or there is no way to keep up with trail proliferation.

Michael Arett (Public) - Our group (Romero Road residents) have proposed a half-mile buffer around housing edges where OHV use, etc. would be prohibited. There *are* residents who care and work on this issues.

John Singlaub (BLM) - Mike and his organization are the model for the enlistment of local communities in helping to manage public lands.

Jacques - I'm really heartened by this talk of a joint effort to plan for the Pine Nuts.

Jerry Hepworth - I like the idea of this neighborhood urban interface cooperator group.

Larie - Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. What I saw yesterday [on the Pine Nuts tour] was a wonderful opportunity for motorized recreation. These are open lands and we cannot criticize people for doing things - blazing new trails - that are legal to do.

Judy Sturgis (Public) - Signing and maybe speed bumps should be placed on the ground to let people know when they are entering BLM lands.

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Larie - It's important to channel people (OHVers) *out* of BLM areas, too . . . so they don't end up in someone's backyard.

Mark - Deer migration routes along the south slopes of the Pine

Nuts are being cut off by development. This might be a zoning issue Douglas County should take a look at.

Jacques -Yes. You're right. I wish purchase and not just exchange were an

option. If something should be BLM or County, so be it.

Juan Guzman (Public) - I work for Carson City. We have an Interface Plan with BLM

John [Singlaub], anything we can do to work with the Carson City BLM office on these issues, we'll be there. Perhaps we should take a second look at some of the stalled land exchange proposals

in the northern Pine Nuts area?

Jacques -It would be best if Carson City, Douglas, and Lyon Counties are

involved in this planning process.

Terry Reed (BLM) - I have to mention that when we're talking about increased

monitoring, signing, volunteers, that has to be backed up with actual dollars - especially when increased BLM funding cannot be

anticipated.

X. Knott Creek Allotment

Presenters:

Pete Christensen, Winnemucca Field Office (WFO) Assistant Field Manager for Renewable Resources.

Gene Seidlitz, WFO Range Management Specialist Shane Findlay. WFO Range Management Specialist

A. Status of Planning Process

- 1. Gene Seidlitz passed out photos of the allotment from the 1980's to the present. Photo handout is Appendix 5.
- 2. Discussion of Planning Process.

Jerry Hepworth -Is there a preferred alternative?

Gene Seidlitz -No. We're still getting comments and have a wide-open view as to

the alternatives.

Terry Reed -Can you describe the photos you handed out? Shane Findlay -

We did not have enough photos to really put together sets of historical photos taken from the same points to show changes over time. These are just representative photos taken at various places inside the allotment over the past 20 years.

B. Discussion of Planning and Preparation for the July RAC Field Review

Mark Farman - Can you describe the logistics of the tour?

Gene Seidlitz - We'll get our staff out there this week to work to finalize

the details.

Mark Struble - There will be a bus to take those of us from the Reno area

to Winnemucca on the evening of Wednesday, July 25th. We'll deal with normal Field Office Reports, etc., Thursday morning at the Winnemucca Field Office. Then at around 10:00 a.m. we'll leave for the Knott Creek Allotment area. We'll tour and then camp at Onion Reservoir. Tents, sleeping bags, and other camping equipment will be provided. Just bring your own fishing poles. We'll return to Winnemucca by early Friday afternoon, and then bus

back to Reno.

XI. Landscape Level Management of Sagebrush Dependant Species

Presenter:

Sherm Swanson, University of Nevada Reno (UNR) Berry Perryman, University of Nevada Reno (formerly at U of WY).

Plant Successional Stages / Transition Stages

Mr. Perryman explained that the climax vegetative state in the Great Basin would be dense sagebrush with depleted understory.

Discussion:

Dan Jacquet - Should BLM be thinking/managing in terms of larger areas - like

the Pine Nut mountains - rather than the traditional method of

working on allotments?

Berry Perryman - Definitely. I think management should be done on the watershed

level.

XII. Great Basin Restoration Techniques - Sage Grouse / Sagebrush

Presenter:

Gary Back

Before Europeans arrived in the Great Basin there were three main causes of vegetative landscape changes: Fire; Drought; Wet Years/Cycles. Fire was usually caused by lightning, which strikes randomly across the landscape. Fire intensity varies. Very intense fire leaves bare ground. The landscape evolves in distinct vegetative stages following intense fire:

- (1) Bare Ground —> (2) Herbaceous —> (3) Herb/Shrub —>
- (4) Shrub/Herb —> (5) Shrub (large sagebrush or Pinon-Juniper)

Valleys with interlaced streams that are periodically struck by random lightning strikes form burn/sage grouse habitat mosaics as areas between various streams burn to different levels of intensity. Mr. Back says that to recreate "natural" sage grouse habitat, it is necessary to recreate dendritic valley mosaic burn/habitat patterns. Each stage from (2) through (5) is important to sage grouse. Stage (2) provides food; Stage (3) brood habitat; Stage (4) nesting habitat; and Stage (5) provides snow ladders essential for winter survival.

Mr. Back also pointed out that cattle grazing does not reduce the fire danger in Stages (3) through (5).

Discussion:

Berry Perryman -

One size fits all just doesn't work and has never worked. These areas of sagebrush or P-J only are anomalies on the ground. We've had the Pleistocene and the Oligocene and now we're having the homogocene.

XIII. Rangeland Weeds: A Focus on Cheatgrass

Presenter:

Brad Shultz, Desert Research Institute, Cooperative Extension Service

Ground disturbances, availability of water, high nutrient availability, and the right kind of seed beds all promote cheatgrass invasions. Mr. Shultz talked about Refugias and Dispersement Corridors as problems in the spread of cheatgrass and other invasive plant species. Refugias are essentially places, such as abandoned mine and dump sites, where weeds get a start in disturbed ground and hold their own until an opportunity to spread presents itself. Dispersement Corridors are long, narrow stretches, such as drainages and frequently graded road shoulders, that promote the spread of invasive weeds over great distances.

Mr. Shultz concluded that we need to understand large, complex ecosystem hierarchies, and then to utilize interdisciplinary management techniques within defined units and subunits, always searching for connectivity and linkages within and among ecosystems across time.

Discussion:

Tina Nappe - How long would it take to accomplish what you've suggested [in

the Pine Nut Planning Area]?

Brad Shultz - That's difficult to answer.

Jerry Hepworth - First we need to know what we have.

Brad - I agree.

John Falen - Could we spray along roads?

Brad - It's never been adequately addressed and I don't know why road

departments blade such wide shoulders.

Jerry - Maybe they should redesign the way they construct shoulders. Last

fall at the Rochester Mine we tried the sugar application [to reduce nutrient levels] and you are welcome to come and take a look.

Brad - I'd like to take a look at that.

Unidentified (Public) - What about using natural controls?

Brad - It's appropriate in the right situations.

XIV. RAC Education Subcommittee Report

Minutes of the Education Subcommittee Meeting of April 19th are Appendix 6. Recommendations of the Subcommittee to the RAC are Appendix 7.

Discussion:

John Falen - Maybe it would be more appropriate for the NCA Subcommittee to

look at NCA problem areas than for the whole RAC to do it. It seems that we need to get our recommendations to Senator Reid in

time to be considered as the technical corrections bill is put

together.

Tina Nappe - I'm not sure the Senator would be that impressed with our [the

RAC's recommendations.

Mark Farman - Can the Winnemucca Field Office put together a list of problems

with the NCA and separate the ones that can be handled

administratively, and provide that to the RAC?

Terry Reed - After we hear from the Senators' offices about what issues concern

them, we can certainly do that.

Mark - Consensus in the RAC may not be possible.

John Falen - I think there are some issues we could all agree about because

there's no reason not to agree.

Tina - Well, John, maybe you and Karen Boeger should go out and look at

those places together and report back to the whole RAC.

Karen Boeger - Yes, I could do that.

XV. Recommended Off-Highway-Vehicle Management Guidelines

Karen Boeger handed out a list of recommended OHV management guidelines prepared by the Northeast California RAC and sent to BLM-California in August of 2000. This handout is purely advisory in nature and is attached as Appendix 8.

1 - Draft Agenda and Visitor Log (available only in hard copy)

2 - Winnemucca Field Office Overview Report (available only in hard copy)

2-A - Winnemucca Field Office Report Q&A's

Questions and Answers:

John Falen - Can the RAC provide input to Senator Reid's office on the technical corrections bill?

Terry Reed - Probably not, because that would be a political activity.

John Falen - Can the RAC visit controversial boundary and access areas?

Terry Reed - We can look into the timing of the bill and arrange a couple of trips for the RAC.

Karen Boeger - I am opposed to advising Reid without a visit [to NCA problem areas].

Gerry Emm - Would it be appropriate for the Congressional Delegation to accompany the RAC on a visit to the NCA?

Larie Trippet - Our Education Subcommittee has made requests to Senator Reid's office about the timing of his bill and has received no response.

Terry Reed - The Congressional Representatives will want to know what problems can be solved administratively by BLM.

Tina Nappe - The Congressional Representatives should clarify issues of concern to them with Terry, who can then report them to the RAC.

Jo Simpson - Senator Reid's office wants to discuss the technical corrections with BLM. At that point the RAC would advise BLM.

Jerry Hepworth - After the technical corrections that concern Senator Reid's office are discussed with BLM, the RAC should visit problem sites and solicit input from those the RAC members represent before advising BLM.

- Terry Reed While the Joint RACs' NCA Subgroup should focus on NCA planning, it can play a significant role here.
- Tina Nappe Issues should be provided to the NCA Subgroup *before* its June 21-22 meeting.
- Terry Reed The issues are: cherry stem roads, ditch and utility corridors, and road maintenance. We need to produce a map that shows the controversial issues.
- John Falen How far along is the Slumbering Hills Trail?
- Terry Reed Most of the trail will be on existing two-tracks so creation of the trail will involve signing.

By the way, there was a fire last night east of McDermitt.

- Karen Boeger Where is the National Public Lands Day Onion Valley Reservoir Project located?
- Terry Reed Right at the reservoir, and it involves actions already included in the approved management plan.

Bennie Romero - Can you clarify the road maintenance issue in the NCA?

Terry Reed - The legislation contained contradictory language. On the one hand it directs BLM to maintain access in accord with the purposes of the Act, but on the other it withdraws the entire NCA from mineral materials activities when current authorizations expire. There are gravel pits within the NCA that we and the counties use to maintain roads that will remain open. Because of the long haul distances it isn't practical to close these pits and still maintain the open roads.

Land Sales and Exchanges:

- Terry Reed There is a renewed emphasis on wind and geothermal power development, but we have to remember that BLM only receives \$50,000 to work on applications to permit it. \$50,000 would probably be enough to pay one part-time person to track all the applications we cannot process.
- Tina Nappe How much money does the State have for wind and geothermal energy development work?
- Mark Farman The State's Electrical Energy Commission has made many recommendations, but little money has been made available.

3 - Carson City Field Office Overview Report (available only in hard copy)

3-A - Carson City Field Office Report Q&A's

Questions and Answers:

Bill Roullier - The Reno Planning Commission discussed why it is necessary to split utility planning into areas north of I-80 and south of I-80. The reason is that a plan is already approved and in place for the area north of I-80, but a plan for the area south of I-80 won't be completed for 12 to 18 months.

Tina Nappe - I want to thank John Singlaub for the wonderful work he's done in land exchanges and resource protection in the Carson Valley. John, you're the right person, in the right place, at the right time.

John Singlaub - Thank you.

Land Sales and Exchanges:

Bennie Romero - Where are the lands proposed for acquisition along the Carson River?

John Singlaub - They are right at the south edge of Carson City. The proposal includes river restoration that would reestablish meanders straightened by the Army Corps of Engineers 40 years ago.

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